

THE STAR COMMUNITY NEWS

Gilb couple named Arcadia's citizens of year

Two people who managed to pull themselves up by their bootstraps have become a legend for us to admire.

They are Ruth and Charles Gilb, named winners of the 2001 Arcadia Citizen of the Year Award.

Their story begins way back when Ruth's parents, of French-Portuguese extraction, came to Montana, where her father raised sheep. Charles, born in Ohio, moved at age 2 to southern Idaho, where he grew up with parents struggling through the Great Depression in the potato business.

Ruth's father taught her the importance of being independent. "You must be capable to care for yourself," he said.

After graduating from high school, Charles joined the Marines, spending 16 months in the South Pacific. As a staff sergeant he learned concentration, discipline and leadership skills.

Following his discharge, Charles entered the University of Idaho, graduating in 1949. While experimenting with frogs in a zoology lab, he met Ruth. As Charles was homecoming chair of a school event, he chose Ruth to head a committee. In September 1947, while still in school, Ruth and Charles married.

They immediately established a work pattern: Ruth cut lawns for the fraternity and sorority houses while Charles watered and sat on the curb, drumming up business for more lawn jobs!

After graduation, they moved to California to start life anew with \$50 in their pockets. Charles began doing odd jobs earning \$52 a week. Ruth obtained employment with a furniture store and later Sears.

A born salesman, Charles sold potato bags for two years, and then entered the potato business and with luck, diligence and determination, he was eventually able to buy the company in 1959. For those 50 years and to this day, all his conducted deals are verbal and sealed with a handshake.

As their children entered the picture, Ruth became a devoted mother to Denise, Michael and Valerie. Along the way Charles acquired other companies, which he later sold. He still works every day.

For many years the market opened at 1 a.m. However, it now opens at 4 a.m. All through the years, in building his company, he has spent long hours of hard work, many away from home.

Charles' service with the city of Arcadia began in 1969 when Ed Butterworth appointed him to the Personnel Board. That was followed by 16 years of serving on the City Council, from 1974 through 1982 and again from 1984 to 1992. He was Arcadia's mayor four times.

Charles excelled in his individual involvement



Dorothy Cunningham

with this constituents. He worked with county officials and organizations on issues that would prove beneficial, and was a supporter of the Boy Scouts and the City of Hope.

Ruth was president of HOY, president of the Arcadia Tour-nament of Roses, served the Arcadia Welfare and Thrift Shop for 12 years, served on the

Sister City Commission, the Senior Citizen Commission and has been a leading advocate of the St. Rita's Church.

Both have been previously honored as Citizen of the Year —Charles in 1976 and Ruth in 1984.

This is the first time that a couple has been honored together.

Their latest project has been the new Ruth and Charles Gilb Historical Museum.

Married 54 years, they say: "We are lucky to have the time and stamina to help other people."

The award will be presented on April 6 at the Chamber of Commerce Installation Dinner at the Holiday Inn.

For more information and reservations, call the chamber at (626) 447-2159.

